BOBBY
GRAY SQUIRREL'S ADVENTURES

RUSTY WAS FLYING HERE AND THERE IN A VAIN ATTEMPT TO SHAKE DASHER OFF HIS TRAIL

Twilight Animal Series

BOBBY GRAY SQUIRREL'S ADVENTURES

By

GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

Author of "Bumper the White Rabbit," "Bumper the White Rabbit in the Woods," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Foes," "Bumper the White Rabbit and His Friends," "Bobby Gray Squirrel," "Bobby Gray Squirrel's Adventures," Etc.

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TWILIGHT ANIMAL SERIES FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

FROM 4 TO 10 YEARS OF AGE

By

GEORGE ETHELBERT WALSH

LIST OF TITLES

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2 BUMPER THE WHITE RABBIT IN THE WOODS
3 BUMPER THE WHITE RABBIT AND HIS FOES
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(Other titles in preparation)

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TWILIGHT ANIMAL STORIES

By the Author

All little boys and girls who love animals should become acquainted with Bumper the white rabbit, with Bobby Gray Squirrel, with Buster the bear, and with White Tail the deer, for they are all a jolly lot, brave and fearless in danger, and so lovable that you won't lay down any one of the books without saying wistfully, "I almost wish I had them really and truly as friends and not just story-book acquaintances." That, of course, is a splendid wish; but none of us could afford to have a big menagerie of wild animals, and that's just what you would have to do if you went outside of the books. Bumper had many friends, such as Mr. Blind Rabbit, Fuzzy Wuzz and Goggle Eyes, his country cousins; and Bobby Gray Squirrel had his near cousins, Stripe the chipmunk and Webb the flying squirrel; while Buster and White Tail were favored with an endless number of friends and relatives. If we turned them all loose from the books, and put them in a ten-acre lot—but

no, ten acres wouldn't be big enough to accommodate them, perhaps not a hundred acres.

So we will leave them just where they are —in the books—and read about them, and let our imaginations take us to them where we can see them playing, skipping, singing, and sometimes fighting, and if we read very carefully, and *think* as we go along, we may come to know them even better than if we went out hunting for them.

Another thing we should remember. By leaving them in the books, hundreds and thousands of other boys and girls can enjoy them, too, sharing with us the pleasures of the imagination, which after all is one of the greatest things in the world. In gathering them together in a real menagerie, we would be selfish both to Bumper, Bobby, Buster, White Tail and their friends as well as to thousands of other little readers who could not share them with us. So these books of Twilight Animal Stories are dedicated to all little boys and girls who love wild animals. All others are forbidden to read them! They wouldn't understand them if they did.

So come out into the woods with me, and let us listen and watch, and I promise you it will be worth while.

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BOBBY GRAY SQUIRREL'S ADVENTURES

STORY I

An Adventure With Dasher the Hawk

When Bobby Gray Squirrel left the deserted house where he had spent the winter with Stripe the Chipmunk and Web the Flying Squirrel, not to mention White Foot the Deer Mouse, he was in a very serious mood, and his first thought was to go right to work to build a home for himself in some friendly tree, and stock it early with nuts for winter use.

His experience that winter, before he had found his fortune in the bag of nuts in the tower room, had made him very thoughtful. "I'm not going to put off work again that should be done today," he said to himself as he frisked along from tree to tree. "I can't expect to have such good luck another winter. But my!" — smiling in recollection — "those nuts were delicious!"

He smacked his lips at the thought, and right on top of it came the low trill of a bird. It was Goldy the Oriole, who had just returned north.

"You look very happy, Bobby," she said, smiling down at him. "You didn't starve to death after all, I see."

"Oh, no, I had all I could eat, Goldy. In fact, I had enough to divide with Stripe and Web. You know they lost their homes, and all they had stored in them, and they had to come and live with me."

"It's a wonder they didn't eat you out of house and home," replied Goldy. "I always thought they were greedy and selfish."

Before Bobby could say a good word for his cousins, Rusty the Blackbird darted into the thicket, and hearing the last words of the conversation interrupted:

"They are, Goldy, and they did nearly eat Bobby out of house and home."

"Oh, no!" replied Bobby. "It wasn't quite so bad as that."

"Well, then, White Foot the Deer Mouse stretched the truth. He told me all that happened in the deserted house. Isn't White Foot truthful?"

"Why, yes, I never knew him to tell an untruth."

"Ah!" laughed Rusty, "then you acknowledge that your cousins, Stripe and Web, were a good deal of a nuisance. Well, never mind! We won't rake up the past! It's a lovely day,

and we ought to be enjoying it. Come on, Bobby, and have a race through the woods."

"I'm afraid I can't," replied Bobby seriously. "I'm going to look for a home, and then begin early to stock it with nuts."

Rusty laughed louder than ever. "Where would you get the nuts?" he asked. "I didn't know they got ripe until autumn."

"Of course they don't, but I must have my home prepared for them when they do get ripe."

"That's looking a long way ahead, Bobby. You don't need to do that. Now don't spoil your summer by thinking all the time of winter. We must play and have a good time while the sun is shining."

Rusty didn't intend to make Bobby forget his new resolutions, but the temptation of his words and the bright sun was too much for him. He glanced around at the woods clothed in bright green leaves, with a few early flowers blooming here and there, and then back at light-hearted, rollicking Rusty.

"I don't believe there's any harm in enjoying yourself when you can. I think I will go with you, Rusty."

"But don't forget," remarked Goldy, half reprovingly, "that we all have work to do in this world, and we must think of that too.

Play and sing a little each day, and work between. That's my motto. Now I must be off to find a place for my nest."

Rusty knew that Goldy was right. So did Bobby. Somehow, as they went off together in the woods, they lost some of their rollicking, happy-go-lucky spirits. Perhaps their conscience pricked them, or again it may have been the day. The sun had suddenly gone beneath a cloud, and the woods didn't seem so bright and attractive.

"I believe I'll go and hunt for a place for my nest," Rusty remarked finally. "I really ought to."

"And I must find some good tree for my summer home, Rusty," replied Bobby.

They had come to the edge of a clearing in the woods by this time, and glancing up Bobby recognized the deserted house where he had spent a pleasant winter. He pointed it out to Rusty, who showed great interest in it, and asked him many questions about it.

"I got in through the window in the tower room," Bobby explained. "I suppose it's closed now. The people must be back."

"Yes, I saw them come the other day, but the window isn't closed yet."

"Are you quite sure?"

Rusty flew across the clearing to find out, and Bobby, keeping in back of the house, followed him. They reached the roof of the house by different routes. Rusty flew straight through the air for it, and Bobby climbed an apple tree, and jumped from that to the top of the kitchen, and then up the rain water leader.

He had no sooner reached the roof of the house than a shadow suddenly drifted between him and the sun. He ducked and looked up. Then his heart almost stood still.

"Dasher the Hawk, Rusty!" he shouted. "Look out! He's after us!"

Rusty, who had been inspecting the tower room window, darted away for the woods where he could hide in the thick bushes. But Dasher the Hawk anticipated this move, and swooped down ahead of him. Rusty turned so abruptly that he almost lost his balance.

Dasher was almost as quick on the wing as Rusty. He doubled up and turned around, and made a lunge at his victim, screaming his blood-curdling cry that sounded for all the world like: "Kill! Kill! Kill!"

Rusty escaped by a pin feather. Indeed, one of his tail feathers came out in Dasher's claws.

Bobby at the first sign of danger had darted for the tower room. The window was still open a few inches, and once through it he might find safety. There was no time for him to cross the clearing and reach the dense woods. Dasher had them both cornered just where they could not escape.

When he reached the window-sill Bobby turned to see what had happened to Rusty. Gasping for breath, and so frightened that he hardly knew which way to turn, Rusty was flying here and there in a vain attempt to shake Dasher off his trail. But he had no chance to do that — not unless he could reach the friendly shade of the big woods.

"Rusty!" cried Bobby when he saw his friend hard pressed. "Rusty, the window is open! Fly in it! Quick! Quick! It's your only chance!"

Rusty thought his last chance had gone, but Bobby's words put new hope in him. Instead of trying to reach the woods, he turned on the wing, and flew straight for the tower room. Bobby seeing him come darted in ahead of him.

Rusty flew straight as an arrow, and landed on the opposite side of the tower room all out of breath. Dasher came plump against the window frame and stopped so suddenly that

it made his head ache. He couldn't get through, and he knew of no way to raise the sash.

He flew back and forth, uttering wild screams, and occasionally beating his wings against the window; but when a voice from the yard below shouted at him he took fright, and flew away. Rusty and Bobby were safe in the tower room, and in the next story you will read of how they were made prisoners there.

STORY II

Imprisoned in the Tower Room

So great was their fear of Dasher the Hawk, and so relieved at their escape from his sharp, cruel talons, Bobby and Rusty crouched in a corner of the tower room for some time, panting and gasping for breath. Of course, Rusty had had the narrowest escape, but Bobby felt so strongly for him that it was just as if he had been nearly caught. Dasher was a ruthless hunter, and few of his victims ever got away from him.

Bobby finally got some of his breath back, and quieted the beating of his heart so he could speak steadily. "That was a close call, Rusty," he remarked. "I thought once Dasher surely had you."

"He did," replied Rusty. "He caught me by the tail feathers, and if they hadn't come out I'd been killed. It's a good thing to be able to slip out of your clothes sometimes."

Bobby smiled at this weak attempt to joke over the experience. He didn't feel very

much like joking himself, but he had to make some light retort.

"Well, Rusty, you're in my old winter home," he smiled. "And you didn't wait upon the order of your coming. I never had any one accept an invitation to visit me so quickly. You hardly waited for the words to get out of my mouth."

"It's a mighty good thing that window wasn't open any higher," replied Rusty, preening his ruffled feathers. "A few inches more and Dasher could have followed us."

"I wonder if he's gone away yet?" asked Bobby.

"No, he's waiting for us outside. Don't show yourself until after dark. Then we can get back into the woods."

"That's what I intended to do," was the prompt retort. "I'm not going to show myself outside until Dasher's gone."

Rusty nodded his head, and after he had ruefully surveyed his tail, which was minus several black feathers, he glanced around the small tower room.

"So this is where you spent the winter, Bobby?" he said. "Well, it's not half bad for cold weather."

"Oh, this was only a part of my home," was the smiling reply. "I had the whole house

to myself — downstairs and upstairs."

"Well, you needed it with Stripe and Web around. I suppose they took the best rooms, and left you the poorest. And I'll bet White Foot stuck to the kitchen and cellar. It's just like him."

Bobby nodded at Rusty's summing up of the situation, which he knew to be about right, and then added:

"If I was sure no one was downstairs, I'd show you the rest of the house, Rusty. I'd like to have you see it. In fact, I'd like to visit there again myself. Suppose we go down and see."

"I don't know," replied Rusty cautiously. "I'm sure the owners are around. I heard voices outside when Dasher flew away. They saw him, and shouted at him."

"Well, if they're really here, I don't want to run in any danger. Still I'm going to take a peek."

Bobby skipped down and ran to the mouth of the trap doorway, and looked below. But he didn't stay there long. There were voices in the hall.

"You're right, Rusty," he said, skipping to the open ceiling of the roof. "The owners are in the house."

"If they come up here, I think we'd better get out of the window," suggested Rusty.

"Oh, no, there's no danger in here. We can hide behind these rafters, and they'd never see us. Remember Dasher is outside waiting for us."

"That's so," murmured Rusty, shuddering. Of the two dangers, the lesser was to stay in the room even if the owners of the house should ascend the ladder to the tower room.

And this is just what they did. A woman's head appeared above the trap doorway and then a pair of broad shoulders. Bobby and Rusty had just time to hide behind the rafters. They were almost as excited as when pursued by Dasher the Hawk.

From the high perch they could look down without being seen. The woman no sooner reached the top of the ladder then she exclaimed:

"This window is open! Now how did that happen? Julie must have forgotten to close it before we left for the city."

She strode across the tower room, and closed the window with a bang. Bobby and Rusty both gave a start at this. They realized in an instant they were imprisoned in the tower room. If the woman left without opening the window again how would they ever get out?

For the first time they wished they had left before she appeared, even if Dasher the Hawk was lurking outside. But there was nothing they could do now but wait and hope for the best. Perhaps the woman would open the window again to air the room. Then they heard her speaking again in an angry voice.

"What a muss up here! The squirrels and mice have been in here after those chestnuts. Why did Julie leave them here?"

Of course, the muss she referred to were the nut shells scattered all over the floor. Stripe, Web and Bobby hadn't been careful to clean them up after their feast. It was certainly a dirty, untidy room.

"I never saw such a house!" the woman continued. "It's dirty from top to bottom."

Then leaning over the ladder, she called loudly:

"Julie! Julie, bring up your broom and dust pan."

The one called Julie proved to be a comely, tidy girl, who was as much distressed by the sight of the nut shells as her mistress, and she immediately began sweeping them up.

"It was your fault in leaving that window open," her mistress scolded. "It was a careless piece of work. It looks as if all the squir-

rels and mice of the woods had spent their winter here."

Julie made no reply, but continued industriously cleaning up. "Why didn't you take the chestnuts away with you after you gathered them?" inquired the speaker. "Now you've lost them all."

"Yes, ma'am," replied Julie, "but maybe it helped some of the squirrels out. They must have been dreadfully hungry to venture in a house like this."

"Umph!" snorted the woman. "We're not gathering nuts to feed to the squirrels. Certainly we're not keeping our house open to let them spend their winters in it. They've done more damage to the beds than they're worth. Those two mattresses are simply ruined."

"But it wasn't the squirrels alone, ma'am," was Julie's reply. "The mice were in the house downstairs."

"Yes, and they got in through that open window too. Squirrels are all right in their place, but a house is no place for them. They do more damage than they're worth. The whole room smells of them."

Now these words distressed Bobby, for he began to feel that he had unwittingly done something wrong by taking possession of the house for the winter. Oh, why hadn't he

cleaned up the shells after they had finished eating the nuts! Then, too, Stripe and Web had pulled out the center of the mattresses of two beds, and had built a nest inside.

Bobby began to see the matter in a new light, and he wished there was some way he could repair the damage. But just at present there was nothing to do. He and Rusty had enough to think of their present difficulties.

A few minutes later Julie finished cleaning up the muss, and she and her mistress went down the ladder. But neither thought to open the window, although the room needed airing. They simply left it closed, and Bobby and Rusty were up there prisoners, with no possible chance to escape.

But of course they did escape in time, and in the next story you will hear of the little girl who gave them their liberty.

STORY III

The Little Girl Saves Bobby and Rusty

The minute Julie left the tower room, descending the ladder to the hall below, Rusty and Bobby Gray Squirrel turned to each other in despair. In escaping Dasher the Hawk, they had plunged into another danger, which, for all they knew, might prove as great as the first.

Bobby was silent, but his eyes were eloquent with concern. Rusty was not willing to accept their imprisonment as a fact until he had made a personal investigation.

"Maybe the upper part of the window is down," he chirped, and immediately he flew from his high perch to the window. Finding no way of getting out there, he went to the other windows, examining each one in turn.

"It's no use, Rusty," Bobby called softly. "All the windows were closed except that one. We're prisoners."

"Well, I'm not so sure about that," replied Rusty. "I'm going downstairs if necessary."

"I wouldn't," said Bobby. "You'll get caught there."

"We're caught up here, and I don't propose to stay here forever. No, I'm going to investigate below."

Bobby cautioned him to be careful, for if their presence was discovered in the house the owners might hunt for them. Rusty darted through the open trap-door and disappeared.

Bobby waited for him to return, anxiously listening and watching. Rusty was so quick on the wing that he could explore downstairs in much less time than a squirrel, and so Bobby thought it wise to keep quiet in the tower room. He knew every part of the house downstairs, but unless some door or window was open there was no chance to escape.

It was a long wait for him. Time never seemed to pass so slowly. But he was rejoiced finally by the appearance of Rusty, who came through the trap-door as noiselessly as he had gone down it. He flew up to Bobby's high perch, and said eagerly:

"I've found a way out, Bobby. There's a window in a bed-room downstairs open at the top. Follow me, and we'll escape through it."

"Are you sure Dasher the Hawk isn't outside waiting for us?" asked Bobby.

"No, I don't think he is. Anyway we must get out of this house or we will be caught and kept in cages all the rest of our lives. You don't want that, do you?"

"Indeed I don't! I'll come."

Rusty hesitated a moment, and then added: "You must be careful. There's some one in the bed-room — a little girl in the bed. I think she must be sick."

"I'm sorry for the little girl if she's sick such a beautiful day as this. Is she alone?"

"She was when I left her. We must hurry before some one else comes. Of course the sick girl couldn't catch us."

Bobby hopped down from the rafter and landed softly ont he floor of the tower room. Then he descended the ladder, jumping from rung to rung. How familiar everything was! How many times the past winter he had made that same trip! He felt perfectly at home in the upper hall, but Julie had cleaned up the pile of shells and dusted off everything in the place.

"This way," called Rusty, flying into one of the bed-rooms. Bobby followed, and as he entered the doorway he could see the window opposite down a few inches from the top. There was room enough for him and Rusty to get through. No one seemed to be in the

room, and a great desire to see the little sick girl in the bed tempted Bobby to run up the corner post and glance down at her.

Yes, there was a girl in the bed, a little flaxen-haired girl, with very tired eyes and sunken cheeks. But the moment Bobby clapped eyes on her, she saw him, and instead of being alarmed at the sight of a squirrel perched on her bed she looked pleased and smiled.

"Oh, Bobby!" she exclaimed. "Have you come? I've been dreaming about you!"

Now Bobby's surprise was so great at being called by his own name that he lost his head completely. Instead of running, he hopped down on the bed, and approached the sick girl with perfect fearlessness.

"I dreamt you were still in the house," the girl continued. "You were here all winter, weren't you? Mamma said you made an awful mess of the house, and she was very angry, but you couldn't help it, could you?"

Now Bobby wanted to answer, but either he was tongue-tied or couldn't say anything that the little girl would understand. So he sat on his hind legs and chattered until the girl laughed. He was so busy trying to make the sick girl understand he was sorry he had made such a mess in the house that he failed to hear

Rusty, who was calling loudly from across the room.

In desperation, Rusty finally flew to the bed. Somebody had entered the room, and Rusty was alarmed. "Quick, Bobby," he called. "Somebody else is here. If they close the window we can't escape."

Now, as if an echo to this thought, there was a bang, and the upper half of the window was closed. Rusty looked up and groaned. "It's too late!" he said.

"That air is too strong for you, dear," said Julie who had closed the window. She was addressing the sick girl on the bed. Then she walked to the door and closed that too.

"You mustn't have a draft blowing on you," she added.

Then she approached the bed for the first time, and there right in front of her was Bobby Gray Squirrel and Rusty the Blackbird. Bobby was standing in the middle of the bed, and Rusty was perched on the bed post.

Julie stepped back with an exclamation of surprise. But the little girl raised a tiny hand to hush her.

"They've come to visit me, Julie," she whispered. "And you mustn't frighten them. They're my friends."

Julie was too surprised and alarmed to speak. She simply stared first at the girl and then at Rusty and Bobby. Bobby backed off a little, and Rusty hopped up and flew to the closed window.

"How did they get in here?" Julie finally managed to ask.

"Why, they've been here all winter," replied the girl quite confidently. "Didn't mamma say they had, and that's why the house was so dirty? They live here, of course."

"But surely that blackbird didn't stay here all winter. He must have flown in through the open window."

"Maybe he did, but I know he's Bobby's friend. They seem to know each other."

Julie turned to Bobby, and then added: "He's so tame maybe we can catch him and put him in a cage for you."

That suggestion was enough to send Bobby bounding from the bed to the window where he joined Rusty. No cage for him. A prisoner? No, never!

"Now you've frightened him away!" cried the sick girl.

"But I'll catch him for you, dear. He can't get out of the room, and we'll put him in a cage for you."

Bobby and Rusty made such frantic efforts to get out of the window that their heads banged against the panes of glass until they threatened to crack. The nearer Julie approached the more violently they scratched and pawed to get free. They were panic-stricken with fright.

"No, no," called the girl from the bed. "Don't try to catch them, Julie. Open the window, and let them out. Then maybe they'll come back some time to see me again. Open the window at once!"

There was an imperative ring in the little voice, and Julie obeyed. The moment the window was raised out hopped Bobby and Rusty, glad to get their liberty once more, and very thankful to the little girl for giving it to them.

In the next story Bobby makes a friend that was worth having.

STORY IV

Bobby Makes Friends With the Girl

Rusty when he flew out of the window made straight for the woods, not stopping to look around to see if Dasher the Hawk was lurking around to pounce upon him. Bobby could not take such a direct path, but after he had hopped from the window-sill to the branch of a tree he stopped and huddled up close to the trunk for fear that Dasher might be near.

Now it was while crouching there to make sure of his safety that he overheard something below that brought him great relief. Two men were standing near the house, and one of them was giving directions to the other.

"If that hawk comes back, John, use your shot gun on him. I don't want him snooping around here to kill off the little chicks when they're hatched. It seems as if he scented them already."

"It isn't that, sir," replied the other. "It must be the small song birds. He hunts around here for them in the clearing every chance he gets."

"Well, use your gun then to protect the song birds. I don't want them killed or frightened off."

This was all pleasant news to Bobby. The owner of the house was a friend to the small birds. Perhaps then he would be a friend to the squirrels. At any rate there wouldn't be much danger from Dasher the Hawk in the clearing. So he concluded the tree near the house was even safer than the woods.

"I think," he said after a while, "I'll stay right here today. That little girl's a friend of mine, and I'd like to see her again. She said maybe I'd come back if she let me go. Well, I'm not going to disappoint her."

Rusty was a little surprised that Bobby didn't immediately follow him in the woods, but as Bobby had got out of the house safely he wasn't going to worry more about him. He had a thrilling tale to tell, and he wanted to fly away and see all his friends, for they would be greatly interested in the exciting adventure.

Bobby climbed up the tree and looked around him. The topmost branches were even with the tower-room, and from there he could look through the windows. He could, he thought, swing from the longest branch and land o the flat roof of the house.

But instead of doing this, he ran down the tree again, and halted before the window of the bed-room where the little sick girl lay. He looked through the window and saw the girl propped up in bed. Her mother was with her now, and the sight of Bobby brought delight to the child.

"Open the window, mamma," she called. "There's Bobby back again. You must feed him before he goes."

Bobby supposed the woman would be very angry with him for mussing up her house, but she seemed to have forgotten that. She opened the window and chirped to him. But Bobby was very cautious. He didn't trust any one but the little girl — not even Julie. This might be a trick of the woman to catch him.

But when she put some nuts on the window-sill, and stepped back in the room Bobby walked to them, and picked them up. He could hear the exclamations of delight from the bed, as the sick girl clapped her hands. The mother smiled, and seemed greatly pleased.

"Oh, mamma, maybe he'll stay with me all summer," said the girl. "If he does I know I'll get well again."

Perhaps there were tears of joy or hope in the mother's eyes, for they looked very moist.

She turned to Bobby, and said: "If you'll play with my little girl and make her better, Bobby, I'll forgive you for damaging my things in the house. Oh, yes, I will."

There was an appeal in the voice which the tears made very pathetic. Bobby whisked his tail, and bobbed his head. Of course, he answered her right away, but she couldn't understand him, which wasn't his fault.

"I'll certainly do all I can," is what he said. "I'll play with her all day long if that will help her to get better."

Bobby was so tender-hearted that he couldn't bear to think of any one being sick and deprived of the sunshine and fresh air. This little girl was shut up in the bed-room so she was denied both.

"I wonder what I can do to make her better," he thought, and for a long time after eating his nut he sat there on the window-sill thinking. The little girl and her mother watched him admiringly, but he was so busy thinking that he scarcely noticed them.

"I think he knows what we're saying, mamma," the girl said finally. "When I called him Bobby he looked just as if that was his name, and it surprised him that I knew it."

The mother smiled. Anything that inter-

ested her little one pleased her, and she nodded once more to Bobby.

"He certainly acts as if he wanted to make friends with you, dear," she said. "If we feed him he may in time come right in the room again and eat out of your hands."

"Oh, if he would!" cried the girl.

Now Bobby wanted to say that he would do it right away if the mother would leave, but he was still a little afraid of her. He was uncertain whether or not she would close the window and imprison him again.

Then, as if she understood his doubts, the mother turned and hurried away, saying as she went: "I'll be back in a few minutes, Clara."

So Clara was the little girl's name! Bobby stored it up in his mind to remember. He liked the name, and thought it applied well to the girl.

"Bobby! Bobby!"

The girl called to him as soon as her mother was out of the room. Bobby instantly hopped inside the window, and stood a second there watching and listening. It was a long distance to the bed. He would have to jump down and run along the floor for some distance before he could reach it. The door was on the opposite side of the room. As if ex-

pecting an enemy, Bobby watched that door and hesitated.

"Bobby! Bobby, won't you come to me?" Clara called again very softly.

Bobby couldn't resist that appeal an instant. Without waiting to hear it repeated he jumped to the floor and ran to the bed. Up the tall wooden post he climbed until he stood on top of it. From that high perch he looked down at the sick girl and frisked his tail this way and that way.

He could watch the door from that position and the little girl at the same time. If any one entered the room, he could retreat to the window and escape. The girl smiled and clapped her hands.

"You're not afraid of me, are you, Bobby?" she added. "We're friends now, aren't we?"

Bobby jerked his head sideways to show that he understood, and swished his tail back and forth.

"Then won't you come and eat this nut?" she continued. "Come and take it out of my hands."

Clara held a fat chestnut out to him. Bobby hesitated an instant, casting another fearful glance at the door, and then dropped down on the bed and approached the girl. She stretched out a hand with the nut in it. Bobby

raised his two paws and grasped it. A little gasp of happiness escaped the girl's lips.

Just then her mother appeared in the doorway, and Bobby with the nut in his mouth leaped from the bed and ran for the window. He stopped on the sill to look back.

"Oh, mamma!" cried the girl. "He took a nut from my hand! Now I know he'll stay and be my friend!"

Of course, Rusty would be jealous of all this high feeding if he knew it, and in the next story you will read about how he joined them in the feast.

STORY V

Rusty Joins in the Feast

Bobby returned to the little girl's bed-side again and again to take a nut out of her hand. Being fed by Clara was even better than eating nuts that he found himself. It made them taste sweeter to have them handed to him with the good wishes of the sick girl.

Then, too, there appeared the greatest variety of nuts, which the little girl seemed to obtain from an inexhaustible storehouse. One day it was a chestnut, then a delicious English walnut full of rich meat, and again a small hazelnut. When she handed him a Brazil nut, with its hard shell cracked so he could readily get at the meat, he was delighted, for he had never before tasted anything so delicious. Then came to a pecan nut, a sweet hickory nut and others which Bobby had no name for. It was always with an expectancy of something new that he went to his daily feast.

Bobby hadn't seen Rusty the Blackbird since the day of their escape from the tower room, and one afternoon he was surprised by hear-

ing his whistle near the house. Bobby immediately ran to the edge of the woods where Rusty was hiding in the thick bushes.

"Gracious me, Bobby!" exclaimed Rusty. "I thought Dasher had caught you. Where have you been all this time!"

Bobby smiled and whisked his tail. "I've been living in that tree near the house, and feeding on the most delicious nuts imaginable. The little girl we saw in bed that day gives me all I can eat every day."

"You mean to say you dare go there again with Dasher the Hawk hovering around!"

"Oh, Dasher is more afraid of that house than I am," was the reply. "I'll tell you something, Rusty. If Dasher pursues me there he'll be shot. I heard the people say that. They're going to protect the song birds from Dasher. So you needn't be afraid."

"Well, that sounds almost too good to be true. If I thought it wasn't a trap to catch us birds, I'd build my nest in that tree. But maybe they don't call me a song bird. Nobody thinks much of my singing. My voice is squeaky, and my whistle sounds as if it was out of tune. No," sighing, "they wouldn't call me a songster."

"You know I think your voice is jolly and cheerful, Rusty," replied Bobby, "and I'm

sure the little girl will. Come with me, and let her see you."

"And be caught and caged? Oh, no, Bobby, I'm not going to run any risk!"

Now Bobby knew that the little girl wouldn't hurt Rusty or any of his friends, but it wasn't so easy to convince the Blackbird of it. Rusty in spite of his fearless ways and jolly, happy disposition, was a little suspicious of boys and girls, and he had no intention of being captured to grace some gilded cage.

"Rusty," Bobby said finally, "will you come to the tree near the window, and watch me? I want you to see how friendly the little girl is. Then if I bring you part of a nut, and lay it outside on the window-sill, won't you fly down and take it?"

Rusty looked curiously at Bobby, as if he expected this was some trick of his old friend. But Bobby was so innocent that he had no reason to suspect him.

"If Dasher the Hawk isn't around, I'll come to the tree," he replied finally. "I won't promise about the rest of the adventure."

Bobby was satisfied with this, and leading the way he ran across the clearing, and then up the tree whose long branch almost swept the window-sill of the sick room. From there he hopped inside to get his customary nut. He

took his first one and carried a piece of it to the window-sill.

Rusty was watching from the tree. "Here it is, Rusty!" Bobby called. "Come and take it."

The little girl was watching with wide open, surprised eyes, and when Rusty darted down and took the piece of nut from Bobby she clapped her hands.

"Oh, Bobby, is that one of your friends?" she cried. "You must bring him every day, and I'll feed him. What do Blackbirds like the best?"

Bobby couldn't tell her, but when Clara's mother appeared she asked her. "I don't know, dear," she replied, "but I think they like grass seeds and berries. I'll find out."

Rusty knew very well what he liked best, but in the early spring season it was hard to find seeds and berries. He had been forced to hunt for hours at a time for a few seeds that had been left over from the summer before, and he was nearly always hungry.

So it was a great surprise to him a few days later to find the most delicious assortment of seeds and berries scattered on the outside of the window-sill. Bobby saw them first, and thought they had been put there for him, but after sniffing at them a few times he knew

EVERY DAY HE CLIMBED UP ON THE BED AND TOOK HIS NUTS FROM THE GIRL'S HANDS

better. With a little cry of joy he hailed his friend.

"Rusty! Rusty!" he shouted. "Here's a feast for you! My, what delicious seeds and berries!"

Rusty flirted his wings, and balanced himself on the limb undecided for an instant, and then flew straight down to the window-sill. In a few moments he forgot all fear and picked up the seeds as fast as he could open and close his bill. Bobby watched him, smiling, and inside a pair of blue eyes opened wider and wider, and from the lips came the words:

"My, wasn't he hungry!"

That feast almost converted Rusty. With his stomach full of seeds, he stopped on the sill long enough to peer in the room. He saw the little girl watching him, but he felt no fear. She certainly wouldn't hurt him. Then with a whistle of thanks, he flew away to spread the news to his forest friends.

Like Bobby, Rusty returned the next day for more seeds, and the next and next. Every morning fresh seeds were placed on the window-sill, while Bobby's nuts were waiting for him inside. Every day he climbed up on the bed, and took his nuts from the girl's hands and ate them there. Even Clara's mother

didn't seem to mind how much muss he made on the bed with his shells.

"Never mind, dear," she said one day when Clara tried to catch some falling to the floor. "I'll clean them up when he's through!"

Bobby had gradually lost his fear of the mother, for he would continue eating his nuts when she entered the room. For a long time he kept his eyes on the open window all the time she was present, but soon he forgot to do this. She never made an effort to shut him in or to touch him.

Bobby permitted the sick girl to stroke his head and touch his bushy tail, but he still drew back when the mother reached out a hand toward him. But the day of the greatest delight to Clara was when Rusty was persuaded by Bobby to come in the window. Rusty hopped inside cautiously, and then flew to the bed post.

"Oh, now I know you're really and truly Bobby's friend, and mine," she said, clasping her hands.

Rusty laughed at this and wanted to say that he had always been Bobby's friend.

"Now won't you build your nest in that tree so I can see your eggs?" she pleaded, addressing Rusty.

This was a request that Rusty was not prepared to answer, but once outside again Bobby said to him: "Of course, you will, Rusty. Don't you see we're making the little girl well again? Her cheeks are plumping out and getting red. Now you build your nest on that branch, and I'll make mine over there."

Rusty hesitated, but after a while he said: "Yes, I'll do it. She's my friend, too, Bobby."

Next day Goldy heard of their good fortune, and in the next story she decided to build her nest in the tree.

STORY VI

Goldy Decides to Build in the Tree

Rusty, after deciding to build his nest in the tree to please the little girl, began immediately to collect sticks and rushes for the foundation, and Bobby encouraged him in the work by carrying some of the larger sticks for him. Rusty usually built his nest in the rushes along the marshy edge of the swamp, and it was something of a novelty for him to choose a place so far from his natural haunts.

Bobby still spent much of his time around the house, which had become more like home than ever, but he made frequent trips in the woods to see his old friends. He hadn't seen cousin Stripe for a long time, and Web only once since their separation at the beginning of spring. But he heard from both of them occasionally through the birds.

But one day he started out with the intention of making a call on them to tell them of some of his adventures. He was quite proud of the fact that he had interested the little girl so much. At first he thought he would invite

his cousins to the house to share with him some of the nuts the girl gave him daily; but on second thought he decided not to.

"I'm afraid they'd only care for what they could get, and not be friendly to the little girl," he said. "No, I won't tell them."

But there were other friends in the woods with whom he wanted to share his good news. There was Goldy the Oriole. She would surely understand and appreciate it. Also Black Cap the Chickadee, and Piney the Purple Finch. Perhaps Flicker the High Hole, and surely Cedar the Waxwing, would be glad to hear his story.

With this object in view, Bobby tripped along joyfully, making his way from tree to tree by jumping from one high swaying branch to another, with an occasional run along the ground. About a mile from the house, he came unexpectedly upon Goldy the Oriole perched on the top of a tall tree.

Bobby was going to hail her with a pleasant good-morning when he suddenly noticed that Goldy's feathers were drooping and her head hung very low as if in grief or fright.

"What's the trouble, Goldy?" he asked instead. "You look tired out or sick."

"Oh, Bobby," she exclaimed, "I've had the

fright of my life! I'm glad you've come. I don't know what to do."

Bobby ran along the branch and stood beside her. "What it is?" he asked. "I don't see anything to be frightened about."

"No, of course not. It all happened last night. And what a night it was! It makes me shudder to recall it."

Bobby was more mystified than ever, and asked for information. Goldy shuddered and glanced around her.

"I just finished my nest up there two days ago," she began after a pause. "You see it swinging from that branch. It's a beautiful nest even if I do say so, and it's so high up I thought no enemy could reach it."

"He'd have to have wings to do it, Goldy," replied Bobby.

"Well, he did have wings. Who do you think it was?"

Bobby shook his head.

"It was Hoot the Owl. He spied out the nest last night, and when I was asleep in it he pounced down upon me. Goodness knows, I'm sure it was a miracle I'm alive now to tell it! I can't tell how it happened. But I got away from him in the dark, and hid until daylight. Of course, Hoot couldn't see then, and I was saved."

"Well, that's something to be thankful for, and not to be so droopy over," remarked Bobby.

"Of course, it is, but what am I going to do? Hoot will be back tonight, and I don't dare stay around here. I'll have to abandon my nest, and I don't know where else to build. Hoot may find me out no matter where I go. Oh, it's a dreadful situation! What do you advise me to do?"

Bobby was very perplexed for a moment, and made no reply. Then suddenly an idea came to him, and his face began to brighten up. The more he thought of the idea the better it pleased him.

"Come with me, Goldy," he said finally. "I have the very place for you where neither Hoot the Owl nor Dasher the Hawk will dare disturb you. We'll make a jolly company — you and Rusty and me."

Goldy the Oriole was greatly surprised at Bobby's words, but more pleased than surprised. If there was any place in the woods where she could raise her young ones without fear of Hoot or Dasher pouncing upon them she wanted to know it. She couldn't get there quick enough.

Bobby without giving her any further information led her through the woods to the clear-

ing on the edge, and then straight across this to the big tree near the sick girl's window. Then he stopped and turned to Goldy.

"Now you can build your nest on any of those high branches, and you will be perfectly safe," he said.

Goldy was now more disappointed than surprised. She didn't like the location at all. There Dasher the Hawk could see her nest from overhead, and there were other dangers from below.

"I thought, Bobby," she said severely, "you were going to help me, and not play a joke on me. I'd be in nervous fear every day of the summer if I built my nest here."

"I think you're mistaken, Goldy. Ask Rusty."

"Is he going to build in this tree?"

"Yes, he's started his nest down there."

Goldy cocked her head sideways and looked below at the few sticks Rusty had laid for the foundation of his home.

"I don't quite see what made Rusty select such a place," she said. "He's generally very particular in such matters."

"Yes, Goldy, I know it, and he's still very particular. But I'll show you the reason for it. Come closer to the window so you can peek in. I want you to see our friend."

Now the little girl's bed had been moved close to the window so she could reach out and touch the window-sill. The days had been growing warmer, and in her new position she could get the full benefit of the sunshine and fresh air.

Goldy and Bobby looked straight into the little girl's face, which lighted up immediately at the sight of them.

"Oh, Bobby, is that another friend you have brought to me?" she exclaimed. "Oh, you beautiful, beautiful Oriole. You are an Oriole aren't you? Yes, I know you are by your golden breast. Oh! oh! I think you must be the handsomest bird there is!"

Now this praise of her plumage pleased Goldy, and she preened her feathers, and held her head high. Bobby laughed good-naturedly when he saw how flattered she was.

"Who is your little girl, Bobby?" Goldy ask finally. "She seems very fond of you."

"She is, Goldy," truthfully answered Bobby. Then in as few words as he could he told her the story of how he and Rusty had got acquainted with Clara, and wound up by saying:

"Now, she'll be your friend, too, and I want you to join us in this tree. Build your nest here to please the little girl, and no harm can come to you."

"But I never did such a thing before!" protested Goldy.

"That's no reason why you shouldn't now."

"But how do I know the little girl would like it?"

Then, just as if in answer to this question, the sick little girl stretched forth her two hands, and said:

"Oh, won't you stay here, beautiful Oriole, and keep me company? Build your nest in this tree so I can see you every day, and when your little ones are born I will watch them and protect them."

Goldy hopped nearer the window, and then back to Bobby's side. "I think," she said softly, "I'll begin building right away."

And then they decided to cut down the big tree, which you will hear about in the next story.

STORY VII

Bobby Hears That the Big Tree is To Be Cut Down

Bobby Gray Squirrel was almost as much pleased as the little girl that Goldy the Oriole had decided to join him and Rusty the Blackbird in building a summer home in the old tree. The little girl didn't really know what Goldy had whispered to her friend, but she seemed to have an uncanny sense of reading the minds of the forest creatures, and she felt happy. Bobby, knowing for certain, was elated, and frisked around much to the amusement of both of his friends.

"What you want to do, Goldy," he said, "is to choose a limb for your nest, and show the little girl you've decided to build here."

"I think she knows it already," whispered Goldy. "Anyway, if you think it's safe, I'd like to hop on that window-sill and get a few of those nice seeds that Rusty's left."

"Safe!" sniffed Bobby. "You've never done anything safer in your life."

Gaining courage from this remark, Goldy hopped nearer and nearer, and finally jumped to the sill. The little girl didn't dare to clap her hands lest she'd frighten her away, but she did say in a very sweet, awed little voice:

"They're for you, beautiful Oriole! Help yourself!"

Goldy did help herself, first to one, and then to another, and finally to so many that Rusty would have been surprised had he returned unexpectedly. But there were plenty more seeds, and long before Rusty appeared the window-sill was spread afresh with more food.

After Goldy had left to find her mate in the woods, Bobby was alone with the little girl for some time. He found that she was very lonely and depressed when neither he nor Rusty was with her. Even when Julie or her mother was sitting with her at the window, reading or talking or playing games with her, she was restless and nervous, looking out of the window frequently in search of Bobby or Rusty.

"She's happier with one of us to talk to," Bobby reasoned, "and happiness makes health. So I will stay with her as much as I can."

He spent the whole morning with her, either frisking around among the branches of the trees, or watching her nearby while he ate his

nuts. But toward noon she fell asleep, and Bobby thought he'd take a run in the woods for a change.

Before he started, however, he was startled by hearing voices below. The little girl's father and another man had come out of the house, and were standing under the big tree looking up among its banches.

"The tree is nearly killed by the worms and insects," said Clara's father. "I don't know whether it can be saved. I'm not sure but I'll cut it down."

"It seems a shame to destroy such a big tree," the other man replied. "But as you say it's riddled with insects and worms. Spraying would do some good, but I imagine bark beetles and worms have got underneath, and they're hard to kill with poisons."

"I had it sprayed last year," added the first speaker, "and while it helped a little at first it was soon worse than ever. If we only had a few birds living around here the trees wouldn't be killed off like this by insects."

"Yes, that's our greatest need in this region — more insect-eating birds. But they're not here."

"Well, I think I'll cut down the tree. The worms and insects are so thick on it they get in the house and make a nuisance."

They walked away then, leaving Bobby dumb with surprise and alarm. Cut down the big tree after Goldy and Rusty had decided to build in it! What would the little girl do! Would she permit it, or would they cut it down some day when she was asleep?

Bobby was so excited that he nearly awakened the girl by his chattering. Then suddenly he stopped in his tracks, and looked up at the tree. A great idea had come to him. If he could rid the tree of the worms and insects, the men would not cut it down. That was a thought that brought a quick change in his actions.

"I'll do it at once!" he said aloud. "I'll see Downy the Woodpecker, Flicker the High Hole, Red-Breast the Nuthatch, and Black Cap the Chickadee. Oh, yes, I'll see all of them."

Bobby's plan was simple. He intended to summon his forest friends to save the tree from destruction. With dozens of them hunting for insects on the tree, it would not take them long to rid it of all the worms, grubs and larvae concealed under the bark or leaves. Why, it would be a holiday for them! He could recall the boast of Downy the Woodpecker that on days when he was very hungry he had eaten as many as a hundred worms and

grubs. Surely Downy would help him! And Flicker—why, he was the most voracious bird in the woods when big fat worms were around!

Bobby skipped away into the woods as fast as his legs would carry him. He didn't even stop to see if the little girl was awake. His mission was too important for that.

On the way he met Rusty returning to the house. "Oh, Rusty," he cried, "you must help me now. They're going to cut down the big tree near the house if we don't stop them."

Rusty was so surprised that he gasped, and said: "I'd like to know how we can stop them."

"Easy enough! Summon all the friends you have in the woods who like worms, grubs and insects. You have some, haven't you?"

Rusty laughed in Bobby's face at this question. After all Squirrels didn't know much about what birds liked. "I have so many who love big fat worms and delicious grubs that I couldn't name them all," he replied. "There are all my cousins and second cousins, aunts and uncles and relatives-in-law, and —"

"Call all of them then!" interrupted Bobby. "The more the better."

Again Rusty laughed. "If I called all of them," he added, "there wouldn't be room on the tree for half of them. They'd break down the branches with their weight."

"Well, of course, I didn't mean as many as that," stammered Bobby. "We don't want to break off the limbs. We want to save the tree, and not destroy it."

Rusty considered a moment, and asked a few more questions. When he was through he said: "You've got a good idea, Bobby, a splendid idea. Of course, we can eat up all the worms and insects in the tree, and if that's all the matter we'll save it. I'll go and call my family."

"I'll see Goldy, and get her to call all of her family, and then I'll hunt up Downy the Woodpecker and see if he'll help."

"Downy's family could clean the grubs out from under the bark," replied Rusty nodding. "My family hasn't the strong bills necessary to peck through the bark. Yes, Downy will be needed."

Bobby thanked him, and hurried on. A little further he ran across Goldy and her mate. When he told his tale to them, they promised to go at once and summon all of their friends and relatives.

The next one Bobby sought out was Downy the Woodpecker. Downy was working up and down a rotten branch of a tree, and was very fretful, for his day's supply of grubs had not been satisfactory. He listened to Bobby's

story, and replied instantly: "I'll go at once, Bobby, for if there are fat grubs there I'll soon make short work of them. I feel nearly starved."

Bobby returned finally to the house, satisfied that his mission had been successful. Half way there he heard a great whirring of wings overhead, and looking up he saw such a host of birds flying toward the clearing that his heart leaped for joy. It looked as if all his forest friends were on their way to clear the tree of insects and worms, and if he was to be there in time to see the fun he had to hurry.

In the next story the birds tried to save the tree.

STORY VIII

The Birds Try to Save the Tree

Now the little girl by the window was still sleeping and dreaming of her wild forest friends when suddenly a strange, unusual noise outside startled her. She opened her eyes in bewilderment, wondering if it was only a part of her dream.

Swish! Sweah-sweah-swe-e-e! Zip-zee-e! Che-wee-e! Che-wee! Che-wee! Clip-clip-clea-a! Willi-willi-willa!

It was the strangest, most peculiar noise that she had ever heard. The air all around seemed full of rushing wings, tinkling water, falling pebbles, soft whistles and whispering echoes. Yet for all its strangeness, the little girl was not alarmed. She looked out of the window, and her eyes caught sight of the whirling cloud sweeping out of the forest like a great host of tiny specks. But as they drew swiftly near her, she saw they were birds.

Bobby by leaping and running with all his might managed to reach the tree first, and running up it he jumped from the limb to the

window-sill. He wanted to be near the sick girl so she wouldn't be frightened. He had no idea that Rusty and Goldy and Downy had so many friends and relatives, and it awed him a little to see so many approaching.

"Oh, Bobby, what does it mean?" gasped Clara. "Are all your forest friends coming to pay me a visit?"

Bobby nodded his head and frisked his tail. At that very moment the girl's mother rushed into the room.

"What a dreadful noise, dear!" she exclaimed. "It must be a storm. I'll close the window."

"No, mamma, it's Bobby's friends," the girl replied. "Don't close the window. I want to see them."

The mother looked out of the window and gasped in surprise. The air was literally filled with birds.

"But I can't let all them come in here, dear," she said. "I must close the window."

Bobby made a dive for the window-sill to escape, and Clara cried: "Please don't close it, mamma. You'll frighten Bobby away."

Well, the birds settled down on the big tree like a swarm of locusts. There were Goldy, Rusty and Downy in the lead, and right behind them the Purple Finch, Mr. Crested

Flycatcher, Belt the Sapsucker, Hermit the Thrush, Singer the Mocking Bird, Black Cap the Chickadee, Yellow Breast the Chat, Mr. and Mrs. Pine Grosbeak, Towhee the Chewink, Mrs. Phoebe Bird, Mrs. Oven Bird, and goodness knows how many others!

They came singly and in flocks and droves, whistling, singing, screaming and laughing. They settled down on the branches until they creaked. Belt the Sapsucker, Downy the Woodpecker and Flicker the High Hole lighted on the high trunk and tapped it with their stout bills.

Red Breast the Nuthatch climbed under and over the big limbs to hunt for insects buried in the bark. Mr. and Mrs. Flycatcher swooped down upon moths and beetles and caught them on the wing. Piney the Purple Finch and Mr. Grosbeak looked under every leaf for signs of worms or grubs.

The big tree was loaded down with the strangest fruits any tree had ever born. And no flowers ever decorated a shrub or plant with more beautiful colors than did the plumage of the birds. Red and blue flashed alongside of pink and yellow, and the white breast of Downy contrasted strangely with the dusty black of the Woodpeckers and the purple

shoulders of the Finches. All the colors of the rainbow were there.

And the songs and whistles and cries of the birds were as varied as their colors and tastes. Hermit the Thrush warbled the most beautiful melodies; Singer the Mocking Bird imitated all the songs he knew; Rusty chirped and warbled; Cedar the Waxwing peeped and cheeped; Gray and Kingbird whistled and shrilled, and Towhee and Yellow Breast murmured their soft, dainty song of happiness as they flitted from limb to limb.

"What in the world does it mean!" exclaimed the mother of the little girl, watching the birds at work. "I never saw such a sight before."

Of course she hadn't, for she didn't know Bobby's friends and their ways. Neither did the little girl, but she seemed to understand what it meant.

"They're hungry, mamma," she said, "and Bobby's told them where to find the worms and bugs. See, they're eating them up. Oh, I'm so glad, for I didn't like the worms and bugs on the tree! They sometimes crawled in the window and dropped on my bed."

"I really believe you're right, dear," her mother replied. "They're eating the worms up. I believe they know."

"Of course, they know," was the rather scornful reply.

Now Bobby, watching his friends enjoying themselves, and at the same time helping the little girl by saving the big tree from destruction, almost wished he ate worms and bugs and grubs instead of nice clean, sweet nuts. It really made him feel hungry to see them at work, and it certainly made him feel helpless. He couldn't eat a single worm—no, not even to save the tree. It made him sick to think of it.

And the more he watched his forest friends devouring the insects the more he wondered at their appetites. Sitting on the window-sill, he said to himself: "If every worm they've eaten was a nut I wonder if there would be any left in the whole world. Dear me, how they seem to like them!"

In the midst of this reflection, Bobby was alarmed by the sudden opening of the door below, and then by the appearance of two men. He instantly recognized them as the two who had threatened to cut down the tree.

They came outside and stared in dumb surprise at the birds in the tree. They had heard the whistling and singing and warbling, and could hardly believe their ears; but when they saw the tree almost black with birds they

opened their mouths and gasped. It was just as hard then to believe their eyes.

"Why—why where'd they come from?" asked one.

"I never saw such a sight," said the other.

The birds were making such a noise, they couldn't hear, and so they gave no attention to them. To make short work of the grubs and beetles and worms, they kept steadily at their work.

"Why, there are finches, warblers, grosbeaks, chats, chickadees, woodpeckers," began one of the men, trying to name all the birds, and then in despair he gave it up.

"It seems almost too good to be true," said the other. "They're cleaning that old tree of all insects. There won't be a grub left when they're through."

"Then," smiled the first one, "you won't have to spray the tree or cut it down. I call that luck."

"It's more like a miracle than luck. I wish they'd stay here all the time, those birds."

When Bobby heard this he was greatly pleased. He knew instantly that his scheme had worked. His forest friends had saved the old tree. The men wouldn't cut it down on account of the worms and insects. He wanted

to chatter aloud, and spread the good news to all.

But before he could open his mouth to say a word two dark shadows swept across the clearing. Bobby glanced up, and what he saw made his heart jump. Dasher the Hawk and his mate were swooping down upon the helpless birds. With so many in the open place around the house, Dasher and his mate could easily kill a few before they could escape to the forest.

"Dasher's coming!" he cried. "Quick! Hide!"

But the birds were too noisy to hear him, and the two dark shadows swept nearer and nearer, as the Hawks circled downward to pounce upon their prey.

The next story will tell how the birds had a dreadful fright, worse than if Dasher had caught one of them.

STORY IX

The Birds Have a Narrow Escape

When Bobby failed to warn the birds of the coming of Dasher the Hawk and his mate with his weak, piping voice, he was in despair. Those two terrible shadows were growing larger and nearer, and not one of his winged friends saw them. In a few moments the Hawks would dash down, and, selecting their victims, they would crush out their lives in one sharp, cruel jab of the talons.

"Oh, dear!" groaned Bobby, as he leaped from the window-sill to the branch. He nearly knocked Towhee the Chewink over in his wild, excited jump.

"Don't be so rough, Bobby!" protested Towhee. "You're very rude to bump into me that way."

"I'll be ruder if you don't stop that noise and listen!" squeaked Bobby.

"Don't you like our singing?" laughed Towhee.

"No! No! Not a bit at this time! Listen!"

"Then you'd better run away in the forest," replied Towhee, flitting away to another branch, "for we always sing when we're eating."

"Towhee! Towhee!" cried Bobby in despair.

But Towhee was lost among the other birds. Bobby turned to Belt the Sapsucker, and caught him roughly by the tail feathers.

"Stop that!" said Belt, giving Bobby a blow with his powerful bill, which hurt him so that he winced. "You can't ruffle up my tail like that, Bobby, without getting something in return."

"Belt, listen to me!" screamed Bobby. "They're coming! They're——"

But Belt with his tail feathers ruffled and his feelings hurt, flew to a higher part of the tree without listening.

Bobby was in despair. The birds were all so absorbed in their feast that not one of them was on guard, and they were so noisy they couldn't hear the soft swish of the terrible wings descending upon them. Bobby flung himself among his friends then and began knocking them off the branches, flinging them this way and that. He would make them listen to him or get them so angry they would fly away.

"Stop that," said Belt, giving Bobby a blow with his powerful bill

"Stop pushing!" cried Purple Finch. "Look out what you're doing, Bobby!" angrily chirped Mr. Pine Grosbeak. "Here! Here!" called Flicker. "Has Bobby gone crazy?" asked Hermit the Thrush.

Even then they wouldn't stop their chatter long enough to let Bobby get in a word, and things would have gone from bad to worse if Rusty the Blackbird hadn't been present. Rusty understood Bobby better than any of his friends. He seemed to know instinctively that something was wrong with him. Instead of flying away, he hopped down on the branch alongside of him.

"What is it, Bobby?" he asked.

"Oh, Rusty! Your friends and relatives are so stupid! They don't know enough to stop eating and chattering when danger is near. Look overhead! Dasher and his mate are coming! I'm afraid it's too late now!"

Rusty looked up, and his little heart missed two beats. He could see the fierce eyes of the greedy hawks, so close were they.

"What will I do?" he gasped.

"Sound the alarm!" replied Bobby. "Warn them that Dasher is here!"

"It will do no good, Bobby," he groaned. "If they rise in the air it will be easier for

Dasher to pounce upon them, and there are no bushes to hide in. Oh, dear me! Dear me!"

Bobby realized the truth of Rusty's words. The birds could not escape now without some of them being killed. They could neither hide nor fly away to the forest. They were caught in a trap. Of course only a few of them would be killed. Dasher had only one pair of claws and his mate another, and while they were using these to crush out the life of Towhee or Hermit or Downy the others might escape to the forest. But which ones would have to be sacrificed? Ah! that was the hard question.

Both Rusty and Bobby were undecided what to do, and in the moment of their hesitation Dasher had drawn nearer. He was circling now for the last time before making the downward shoot. He was selecting his victim. After that, when he dropped straight as an arrow out of the sky, it was sure death.

But at that particular moment Gray the Kingbird rose from the topmost branch of the tall tree, and uttered his shrill battlecry. It was a series of harsh, grating screams of defiance. Every bird of the forest knew that cry. Usually it meant Mr. Crow or some other big bird in the vicinity, for so pugna-

cious was Gray that he didn't hesitate to challenge anything on wings to a battle.

Accompanied by several of his family, who joined him in the battlecry, Gray flew straight up in the air. His coming disconcerted Dasher and his mate. While Gray was no match for Dasher in a combat, he was nevertheless so quick on the wing and so bold that bigger birds than the Hawks let him alone.

Gray's method of attack was to rise high in the air, and dart down on the back of his adversary. Dasher knew this, and in order to prevent the Kingbird getting above him he made a swift dart in his direction. It was a vicious dive, and Dasher's mate coming up on the other side sought to head off Gray's downward dip. The ruse almost succeeded. Nothing but a wonderful series of dodging and tumbling saved Gray from annihilation.

But he was a past master in dodging, twisting and tumbling in the air, and he eluded the Hawks with wonderful skill. With a scream of triumph, Gray rose above his two enemies where he felt perfectly at home.

While this was taking place, a great change had come to the birds below. Gray's first sound of alarm had stopped their singing and warbling. Every eye was turned upward, and every heart stopped beating. The sight of the

two Hawks so close to them paralyzed them at first, and they cowered and crouched among the branches of the tree in deadly fear.

Gray's first triumph over Dasher gave them sudden hope, but a moment later it left them. Dasher and his mate refused to follow the Kingbird in the air. They were not there to settle any old dispute. They were hungry, and a good dinner awaited them below.

With a wild cry that sent the blood curdling through the veins of the small birds, Dasher and his mate darted downward, ignoring Gray circling above their heads. It was a moment of terror to the warblers. Even Rusty ducked his head and held his breath.

But Gray, joined above now by several of his family, replied with their shrill battlecry, and down they shot at the Hawks. They caught Dasher on the head and back with their sharp bills and made the feathers fly. Angry at this interruption the two Hawks turned a moment on their tormentors, but the valiant Kingbirds eluded them and rose higher.

In spite of the Kingbirds, however, Dasher and his mate would have carried off two or more of their victims if something hadn't happened that none of the birds expected. Far below there came a thunderclap, which for a moment seemed to split the earth and air with

noise a thousand times more dreadful than anything they had ever heard. Every bird crouched and trembled — every one but Dasher, who uttered a frightened scream and rose heavily in the air.

There was another clap of thunder, and some of Dasher's feathers spouted from his tail. Then with the swiftness of terror he and his mate flew upward and away, leaving the birds in full possession of the field.

The owner of the house had shot twice at the Hawks, and it was the noise of his gun that had startled the birds and driven Dasher and his mate away.

In the next story Bobby hears some unpleasant news.

STORY X

Bobby Hears Unpleasant News

When the explosion of the gun underneath the window drove Dasher and his mate off, Bobby, who was as ignorant as the birds of what it meant at first, crouched low down on the window-sill, and then when the little girl screamed he leaped back inside of the room. But the second report was not so startling, and the girl recovered herself with a laugh.

"Oh, Bobby," she said, trying to calm his beating heart, "did it frighten you? Never mind, it won't hurt you or any of your friends. It was for those cruel hawks."

This explanation, and the touch of the girl's hands on his back, restored some of Bobby's confidence. He straightened himself up and looked out of the window. He was just in time to see Dasher disappear, flying as fast as his wings would carry him for the forest, with his mate close behind him.

But there was another commotion outside. The birds had been frightened into silence by the startling report of the gun, but now they

suddenly came to life again. Every voice was raised in a cry of fear, and dozens of wings began beating the air.

The noise was deafening at first, and the confusion so great that Singer flew plump against Flicker and nearly knocked him over, and Hermit got mixed up with Piney, and Downey ran headfirst into Belt. Around and around the tree they flew, squawking and screaming with fright, and then with one accord they rose in the air in a dense flock.

"Oh, Bobby, tell them not to be frightened!" exclaimed the little girl.

But Bobby could not stop the flight or quiet the confusion. The birds were panic-stricken, and not knowing what else to do they followed Dasher for the forest. Bobby raised his voice to call them back, but they paid no attention to him.

"I believe we frightened the birds more than if we hadn't shot at those hawks," said one of the men under the window.

"Yes, it's too bad! I'm afraid they'll never come back. They're more afraid of a gun than of Hawks."

Yes, this was true! Their fright was a dozen times greater now than when Dasher appeared among them. They could understand the Hawks, and knew exactly what their

danger was, but the gun was something that terrified them beyond words. They couldn't understand that it had been shot off to protect them and not to injure them.

"Oh, Bobby," pleaded the little girl, "can't you tell your friends it was not meant for them?"

Bobby understood this plea. He understood everything now, although at first it had been as confusing to him as it had been to the birds. Yes, he would try to let them know the gun was to protect them. He nodded his head, and frisked his tail. Then down the tree he ran, and straight across the clearing for the forest. He ran so close to the men that he heard one of them say:

"There's Clara's little squirrel. I hope we haven't frightened him away too. It would break her heart if he left and didn't come back."

Bobby stopped long enough to nod his head to reassure the men that he wasn't frightened. He wanted to tell them he was going off on a mission for Clara, and not running away with fear.

When he reached the edge of the forest, he was surprised not to find any of his friends. The whole woods appeared to be deserted. Not even Sleepy the Opossum was in sight.

He ran up a tree, and from the top branches chattered loudly, hoping to attract attention. But there was no response, not even the cheep of Mrs. Oven Bird or the croak of Hoppy the Toad.

"This is serious, I'm afraid," he remarked, running down the trunk of the tree. "They must be way off in the woods."

He ran along for some time until he came opposite the home of Web the Flying Squirrel. Bobby called to him from below, and Web finally poked his head out of a hole in the tree.

"What is all this I hear about your doings, Bobby?" his cousin said severely. "A nice trick you played on all your friends, the birds. They're in a terrible rage over it. They'll want to tear your eyes out for treating them so. Mrs. Phoebe Bird was so frightened that she'll probably have nervous prostration."

"Why, cousin, I played no trick on them," replied Bobby. Web interrupted him sharply: "You may not call it a trick, but I do. You coaxed them into the clearing where Dasher could pounce upon them, and then as if that wasn't enough you had some one shoot at them. Dear me, what do you call it?"

"The birds believe that?" gasped Bobby.

"Why, surely! What else could they believe?"

Bobby left his cousin, with his mind all troubled and confused. If his friends, the birds, believed any such thing, he had to see them at once, and explain. Rusty and Goldy would understand, and with their help he could make every one listen to the truth.

He ran along until he passed the place where Stripe the Chipmunk had built his new summer home. Bobby had no intention of stopping to speak to his cousin, but Stripe apparently was waiting for him. He hailed him at once.

"Stop, Bobby!" he cried. "You've got yourself in trouble at last, I understand. I always said you'd come to some bad end. Now maybe you'll believe me."

"What have I done?" asked Bobby, anxious to learn just how much the birds had told Stripe.

"A nice question to ask me!" retorted Stripe angrily. "Don't you suppose I know, and everybody else in the forest? How could we help knowing with all the birds flying away, crying and wailing as if their hearts were broken?"

"I know they got a fright," answered Bobby, "but they don't lay it to me surely."

"They don't!" sniffed Stripe. "Well, you ask them. When Rusty told me—"

"What did Rusty tell you?" Bobby interrupted.

"Enough to make me understand that you'd been up to one of your old tricks," was the cautious reply. "Rusty's finally got his eyes open. I always thought he would in time."

Bobby felt a sudden, strange loneliness. Had Rusty told Stripe he had tricked the birds and caused all their fright? It didn't sound like Rusty, and for a moment Bobby doubted it. Then Stripe continued:

"Goldy the Oriole, too, told me. She was so frightened that she couldn't fly another foot without resting here. So while she rested she told me all."

"Goldy, too!" murmured Bobby, his heart sinking more than ever. If he had offended both Rusty and Goldy then, indeed, he had no friends left in the woods. None of the birds would believe him if his two oldest and truest friends distrusted him.

"Ha! Ha!" laughed Stripe. "I see now you believe me when I say that you've been found out. Well, I'm sure it's not my fault, and I'm not going to worry about it."

With that parting shot Stripe slipped down into his hole, leaving Bobby very much alone

and terribly depressed. He felt for a moment as if he was an outcast without a friend in the world. Then he thought of the little sick girl, and his eyes brightened. "She believes me," he said, "and I'll go back to her if Goldy and Rusty don't want me as a friend. I'm sure she'll always trust me."

In the next story Bobby picks up many friends, who agree to go with him to find the birds and induce them to come back.

STORY XI

Bobby Finds Plenty of Help

After leaving Stripe the Chipmunk, whose information that the birds were all offended at him, Bobby decided to continue his way through the woods until he could find his feathered friends and explain to them. In particular he wanted to meet Rusty and Goldy, for they would be the most likely ones to listen to him. On his way he said to himself that the birds were a very peculiar lot.

"They're so sensitive and excitable," he remarked, "that they're easily thrown into a panic, and then they don't seem to be able to distinguish friends from foes. If they'd only stopped and thought a minute, they could have seen that gun was aimed at Dasher and his mate and not at them. But," sighing, "I suppose they can't help it, and I must accept them as they are made."

Bobby rather plumed himself upon his greater sense, for had he not understood the meaning of the loud report? Yes, but he had overheard the remarks of the men, and had

seen the tail feathers flying from Dasher as he flew toward the forest. Perhaps none of the birds had heard or seen what he had.

"Maybe if they had," he added a moment later, "they wouldn't have been so frightened."

Then, too, the little girl had assured him that no harm had been intended for him or his friends. That thought made him more tolerant toward Rusty, Goldy and the others.

"I must find them and explain," he said, as he hurried along.

He passed a stream where Washer the Raccoon was cleaning his food before eating it. Washer was a very fastidious eater, and had to wash everything before he put it in his mouth.

"Have you seen the birds today, Washer?" Bobby asked, stopping by the side of the stream.

Washer finished cleaning a choice bit of a root for his dinner before he answered.

"Yes, Bobby," he replied then. "I saw them headed south — hundreds and hundreds of them. They seemed in a great hurry, and terribly excited. What's happened?"

Bobby was relieved that none of them had stopped to tell Washer anything that might prejudice him. He sighed, however, and then

deciding frankness was the best policy he told Washer the whole story. Washer nibbled daintily at his root, and finally replied:

"I don't see why they should be offended at you," he said. "They surely can't believe you drew them into a trap to be shot. Your cousins, Stripe and Web, just imagined that. I don't believe Rusty or Goldy told them anything against you."

"I wish I could believe that," sighed Bobby. "Anyhow I must find them and explain. The little girl will be heart-broken if they don't come back. Rusty and Goldy had both started to build their nests in the big tree, and she knows it."

"You seem very much interested in the little girl," said Washer, smiling. "Is it for her you're taking all this trouble?"

"Yes, for her and for the birds. If they build in the big tree, they will be safer than in the woods, and they won't go hungry all summer. The little girl will feed them."

"That ought to be a big inducement. If there's anything I can do to help, Bobby, I'm ready."

Bobby was silent for a moment. Then he looked up wistfully, and added: "Will you go along with me, Washer? You might help me in explaining. Two are better than one."

"I hate to leave this stream, Bobby," Washer replied slowly, "for it's full of rich, succulent food, but if you really want me I'll go with you."

"I do, Washer," was the prompt answer.

Washer told him to wait while he put his house in order, and a few minutes later he announced that he was ready.

Washer and Bobby walked along side by side, heading south in the direction the birds had taken in their flight. Bobby was very grateful for Washer's company, and his spirits rose a little. But as they penetrated deeper in the woods, and saw no signs of any feathered creature, he began to fear that the birds had continued their flight to the Southland. Suppose they had gone out of the North Woods! What a lonely summer it would be without any of the birds mating and nesting in the trees! It would be a voiceless, songless world indeed!

When they passed a tree, and saw Sleepy the Opossum sunning himself among its branches, they hailed him eagerly. "Did you see the birds pass this way, Sleepy?" Bobby called.

"Yes, a long time ago!" replied Sleepy, opening one eye. "I thought it was a wind storm at first, they made so much noise with

their wings, but when I heard them crying, screaming and calling to one another, I laughed and went to sleep again."

"Which direction did they take?"

"They were flying south. Why do you want to know?"

Bobby told Sleepy his story. He was greatly interested. Even Sleepy realized the gravity of the situation. If all the birds were frightened away for the summer, the woods would be terribly lonely, and the insects and worms would destroy most of the trees.

"I'm sorry to hear it, Bobby," he said, "but I don't see what can be done."

"We can go to them and explain. Washer and I are on our journey now to find them."

"It will be a wild goose chase, Bobby. You don't know how far they've gone, and if they keep on flying you could never overtake them."

"That's true," sighed Bobby, "but we must try. Won't you join us? I'm sure they'd listen to you if they wouldn't to me."

Sleepy, who seemed always to be tired, hesitated at undertaking such a journey, and said: "I haven't finished my nap yet, Bobby. After that I might think of it. Yes, I'll follow you."

"It will be too late then, Sleepy. The time to do it is now."

"You mean you're lazy, Sleepy," said Washer suddenly. "You had as much sleep as I did last night. Come on now, and go with us."

Sleepy was a little sensitive about his common weakness, and his eyes were suddenly wide open. "I'm not a bit lazy, Washer," he retorted. "I was up nearly all night, but I can keep my eyes open if you can. I'll go at once."

Sleepy was a slower traveler than Washer or Bobby, and he frequently got tired and wanted to rest. They made slight progress, and when they came to the river where Billy the Mink lived Sleepy was glad to stop and talk to Billy.

"Which way did the birds go, Billy?" Bobby asked after he had told his story.

"They followed this river, and that runs south."

"Then we're on the right track. Won't you accompany us, Billy?"

"Why, I don't know. Perhaps I will as far as the river goes. I can swim as fast as you can walk. I should hate to have the birds desert the woods."

So Billy the Mink joined the company, and on the way they picked up Gray Back the Weasel and Curly the Skunk. Billy the Mink routed out Browny the Muskrat and made him swim along by his side to keep him company in the water. Then they stumbled upon Billy Porcupine, who agreed to go with them, and when they came to Mr. Beaver's dam they pounded on the roof of his house until he came out and agreed to accompany them. Groundy the Woodchuck was the last one they met, and he quite readily consented to go with them. It was a strange company, but not stranger than their mission. The summer would be dull and tame without a bird in the woods.

And then Bobby's friends quarreled so they had to separate, which left him alone again.

STORY XII

Bobby's Friends Quarrel

When the strange company of animals, with Bobby in the lead, came to a bend in the river, Billy the Mink hesitated. He had agreed to travel south with them so long as the river went in that direction, but now that it turned west he wanted to stop.

"The birds continued south," he said, "and to go further with you would mean leaving my river. I don't think I can go on."

Bobby showed his disappointment, and tried to persuade him to change his mind. But Billy was stubborn.

"If I go far from the water," he explained, "and get lost in the woods, I'd die."

"I don't see why you're so stuck on the water," grumbled Gray Back the Weasel. "As for me I could get along without water very well."

"Anyone could see that with half an eye," retorted Billy. "I never knew a Weasel yet that liked to take a bath."

Gray Back humped his shoulders at this and showed his teeth; but before he could retort angrily Browny the Muskrat broke in. "I quite agree with Billy," he said. "It isn't safe to leave the river. I think I'll stay here until you return."

"Oh, Browny!" exclaimed Bobby. "I thought you'd go on to the end. I didn't think you'd quit."

"I have to think of myself first, Bobby."

Mr. Beaver, who had been looking across the river, suddenly interrupted. "This would be a splendid place to build a dam," he said. "I believe it's better here than upstream. I'm going to stop and begin building."

"You, too, Mr. Beaver?" asked Bobby in disappointment, for he saw that his friends were beginning to desert him one by one.

"All our water friends are backing out," remarked Curly the Skunk. "They think more of their daily bath than of anything else. Well, let them stay. I'm glad we're rid of them."

Browny the Muskrat took offense at this slur upon his tribe, and said: "I can't for the life of me understand how any animal can keep clean without an occasional swim."

"Huh!" snorted Billy Porcupine. "That means me, I suppose. I don't go in the water

unless I have to, and I'm as clean as you, Browny. Look at my paws."

"Come, Browny," called Billy the Mink, "let's take a swim. If they like the land better than the water let them have it. As for us we know how good it feels to dive and swim in the river. Isn't that so, Mr. Beaver?"

"It certainly is. I'm glad I don't have to stay on the land all the time, and crawl in dirty holes when I want to sleep."

"Ha! Ha! Hear Mr. Beaver talking about dirty holes!" laughed Sleepy the Opossum. "As if his house wasn't made of mud, and plastered with mud! I never saw such a muddy house as a beaver's. Did you, Washer?"

This made Mr. Beaver very angry, and he rushed at Sleepy, who promptly ran up a tree and made faces at him.

"Catch me, if you can!" he cried. "If I can't swim as well as you, Mr. Beaver, I can climb trees better."

"Maybe you can," snorted Mr. Beaver now thoroughly aroused, "and I can cut down trees with my sharp teeth."

With that he began using his powerful teeth to cut down the tree to dislodge Sleepy. Bobby was greatly distressed at the quarrel among his friends, and tried to calm them and make peace.

"Sleepy didn't mean anything, Mr. Beaver," he said. "I wouldn't waste my time cutting down that tree."

"Keep out of my way," answered Mr. Beaver angrily. "I'm going to cut down this tree so it will fall in the river. Then Sleepy will have to take a swim."

"Oh, no, you won't," interrupted Billy Porcupine, taking Sleepy's side. "Sleepy might drown."

"What're you going to do?" demanded Mr. Beaver.

"Going to curl up under the tree and go to sleep," was the laughing retort, and true to his words Billy Porcupine doubled up in a ball. Mr. Beaver couldn't get over him to reach the tree without sticking Billy's sharp spines in his face.

"I call that downright impudence!" exclaimed Mr. Beaver. "But what more can you expect of these land animals! They're all alike — dirty, impudent fellows."

"Hold on there!" cried a deep voice, and Groundy the Woodchuck faced Mr. Beaver with his little eyes snapping angrily. "I'm a land animal. Do you call me dirty and impudent?"

"And me?" echoed Gray Back the Weasel.

"And me?" snapped Curly the Skunk.

Mr. Beaver would have backed down at the sight of the three, if Billy the Mink and Browny the Muskrat had not crept up to his side in formidable array.

"Why, yes, I call all of you that!" replied Mr. Beaver then.

Now it was quite certain that a free fight would have followed if Bobby hadn't once more interfered.

"Stop this," he said. "I'm sorry now I ever invited you to come with me."

"You're on our side, Bobby!" called Groundy. "You're a land animal, and Mr. Beaver slurred all of us."

"And you, too, Washer!" added Curly.

"No he isn't!" snarled Browny. "Washer's more of a water animal than a land animal. He never eats his food without giving it a bath first. You come with us, Washer."

Washer looked first at one side and then at the other. They presented a formidable array of sharp teeth, and if they chose to fight many of them would be seriously hurt.

"Well," he replied after a pause, "if I'm claimed by both sides, I think I'll keep out of it. I don't think I like either company. I'm going back home."

"Oh, Washer, are you going to desert me?" cried Bobby.

"Yes, Bobby, I don't like the company you're with."

"The idea!" snarled Mr. Beaver, turning his anger upon Washer.

"I'd like to know when my company wasn't as good as yours," snapped Groundy the Woodchuck.

Washer merely laughed and ran away in the bushes. He wasn't going to stay to see the fight, nor to get in it. Groundy still grumbling and gnashing his teeth followed. "I'll get him yet!" he cried.

Curly immediately made an excuse to follow Groundy to help him if necessary. Gray Back the Weasel wasn't going to stay alone to face the water animals, and began backing out of sight. This left only Sleepy the Opossum, who was up the tree, and Billy Porcupine curled up safely at the foot of it.

"Oh, they're afraid of us!" exclaimed Billy the Mink. "Don't follow them. Let's take a swim!"

They rushed for the river and plunged in it, making a great noise and splash. Bobby was in great distress. He turned to Sleepy, and said: "Won't you go on with me, Sleepy?"

"I'm sorry, Bobby," he replied, "but I'm very tired and sleepy. I must finish my nap."

"But surely you'll go, Billy," he added, turning to the Porcupine.

"No, Bobby, I can't go another step," he replied. "I'm going to curl up here and rest until morning of next day."

With all of his friends deserting him, Bobby turned sadly away. The journey that had begun so pleasantly was turned into a solitary trip because of the quarrel among the animals. If the birds were to be found he had to do it alone.

But before he found them he had a very narrow escape from death, which you will read about in the next story.

STORY XIII

Bobby Has A Narrow Escape

After the quarrel among the animals, Bobby continued his journey alone. He was very sad and disappointed, but he was not easily discouraged. For the sake of the little girl, who would be pining for his return, he kept steadily on, following the south wind as a guide, and always keeping a close watch for any signs of the birds.

Once he stumbled upon the tracks of Sneaky the Wolf, but he quickly took to a tree where he was safe. Sneaky was not hunting for him, for he knew that Bobby could easily escape if there was a tree in sight.

"Have you seen Mr. Fox this morning, Bobby?" Sneaky asked, squatting down on his haunches to look up at him.

"No," replied Bobby truthfully. "I'm looking for the birds, my friends, who were frightened, and flew away to the south. Have you seen them?"

"Yes, I passed them a short time ago, and followed them a long distance. They seemed

very tired, and I thought some of them might drop by the wayside."

"I hope they didn't," chattered Bobby, "for Mr. Fox would surely get them. I wonder if he's following them for that purpose."

Sneaky thought perhaps that might be true, and he decided to turn around and follow the birds too. "You see," he remarked, "I might pick up Mr. Fox while he was eating a bird."

He grinned wickedly at this thought, and licked his chops. Bobby remained in the tree until Sneaky had disappeared. Then he climbed down, and trotted along as fast as he could.

In a little while he had another surprise and fright. Something red flashed out of the thickets at him, but Bobby was too quick and agile for Mr. Fox. He was up a tree like a flash, and looking down at his enemy he scolded him roundly.

"You needn't scold me, Bobby," Mr. Fox replied, smiling. "It was all a mistake. I thought you were a bird. I've been following them for hours and hours, and I thought one of them had dropped in the bushes. They're pretty tired with their long journey."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself, Mr. Fox," replied Bobby. "What have the birds done to you that you want to kill them?"

LOOKING DOWN AT HIS ENEMY, HE SCOLDED HIM ROUNDLY

"Nothing," smiled Mr. Fox licking his lips. "But I'm very hungry, and a bird or two would make a fine dinner."

"Aren't you ashamed of yourself! The birds are my friends, and if you kill them you make me your enemy."

"Well, Bobby, I can't help that," drawled the Fox, stretching himself lazily. "I've got to eat, and the Rabbits are scarce in these woods. Besides, they're so shrewd and knowing it's hard to catch one of them out of their burrows."

"I'm glad of that!" retorted Bobby.

"It seems to me," snapped Mr. Fox, "you are my enemy. All right then, Bobby, the first time I catch you I'll punish you. I shouldn't be surprised if you'd make a pretty good meal. You're quite fat, and if I could climb that tree I'd bite your head off."

"I believe you would. But you can't climb the tree, and I'm not coming down until you leave."

Mr. Fox trotted around the tree, and sniffed at the trunk. Then he began laughing. "I think," he said, "you'll stay up that tree a long time then. I'm going to wait here until you do come down. I've changed my mind. I'm going to have a squirrel for dinner instead of a bird."

"I don't think you are, Mr. Fox," replied Bobby confidently. "In fact, I shouldn't be surprised if you were eaten up first. Sneaky is —"

"Sneaky!" exclaimed Mr. Fox, jumping to his feet, and looking around. "Is Sneaky in this woods?"

Now Mr. Fox had such a dread of Sneaky the Wolf that the very mention of his name alarmed him. Bobby knew this, and it pleased him to see the Fox's sudden fear.

Neither Bobby nor Mr. Fox knew that Sneaky was in the neighborhood. They hadn't seen him approach stealthily, nor heard the snapping of a twig as his feet patted softly on the carpet of moss. But Mr. Fox was immediately alert, and he began sniffing the air to catch the scent of any friend or foe.

It was well that he had the power of smelling other animals, for he became suddenly restless and nervous. He trotted around the tree, holding his nose high in the air. He had just about decided to leave when Sneaky, who had been crouching for a jump, suddenly launched his body in the air as if shot forward by a spring, and came bounding toward the tree.

But Mr. Fox was almost as quick as Sneaky. He cleared the tops of the bushes in one tre-

mendous spring, and away through the woods he ran. Sneaky, disappointed, flew after him, and the last Bobby saw of either of them was a flash of their tails as they disappeared in the thick forest.

"I don't know whether I want Sneaky to catch him or not," Bobby said to himself. "Mr. Fox is a cruel, wicked enemy, but Sneaky isn't any better. Well," sighing, "I can't help it. I'm thankful enough I'm not in Mr. Fox's place."

There was no longer any danger to Bobby, for Sneaky and Mr. Fox had run north, and Bobby's trail led south. He climbed down the tree, and started off again on his journey.

Now in a little while he had evidence that the birds were not far ahead of him. He passed the home of Great Horn the Owl, which was close to that of Hoot the Owl, who as a lesser cousin of Great Horn liked to build his nest nearby so he could find protection in times of danger.

When Bobby passed, Great Horn was standing at the entrance to his hole. The sunlight blinded him so that he couldn't see Bobby. Some great excitement must have called him from his dark hole in the middle of the day.

"What was all that noise?" Bobby heard him ask in his deep, heavy voice. At first

Bobby thought he was talking to him, but a moment later he saw that in a tree right across the way Hoot, his cousin, was standing at the entrance to his hole, winking and blinking in the sun.

"On my word, Hoot," Great Horn continued, "it sounded like the whir of countless wings. Can I have been deceived?"

"No, cousin," replied Hoot. "You heard right. I heard it, too, and crept to the door just in time to see."

"What was it?" was the eager question.

"Birds — thousands and thousands of them! They were flying south, all tired out, and so excited that they all talked at once. From the way they were flying I know they can't go much further."

"That's good news — the best I've heard in a long time. If they stop near here, we'll have fine hunting tonight. You say there were thousands and thousands of them?"

"Yes, so many I couldn't begin to count them."

"Ah! We'll have a great feast tonight. But I wonder what's the matter with them. This isn't the season for migrating south."

"No, of course not. Something's frightened them, and they're in a panic. And you know how easy it is to corner a bird when he's

excited. I think we'll have a great night of it. I wish it were dark now. I can't see a thing in this blinding light."

"Nor me! Better go back to sleep, and we'll get up at dusk for an early start. I can't stand this light any longer. It hurts my eyes."

When they crept back in their holes, Bobby jumped to his feet. "I must hurry now, and reach the birds before dark," he said, "or Hoot and Great Horn will kill many of them."

With more reason than before to find his feathered friends before a great disaster overtook them, Bobby raced along as fast as he could, scarcely stopping to eat or drink. He thought only of his friends, and not a bit of his own comfort.

In the next story Bobby finds the birds and comes to the end of his journey.

STORY XIV

Bobby Finds the Birds

Bobby's journey end was much nearer than he expected, and it came as a great surprise to him, for he was still looking forward to many, many miles of hard travel. He had forgotten all about what the Owls had said of the birds being near and very exhausted with their long flight.

Suddenly without warning he came to a small natural clearing in the middle of the woods, and his little heart beat with joy when he heard the warbling ,whistling and calling of the birds ahead. He ran toward the clearing as fast as he could, but when he reached the edge he stopped as he heard many voices wrangling. High above the others he could hear Rusty.

"You're wrong, Flicker," Rusty was saying in a loud voice. "Bobby had nothing to do with it. He was as much surprised as we were. We're not sure but he was shot, and is lying dead under the tree at this very moment."

"Well, of course, if that's the case, I'll take back what I said," replied Flicker. "I hope really he isn't killed."

"I didn't say he was," replied Rusty. "I simply said he might be. Poor Bobby, I wish I knew."

Now Bobby couldn't keep his friend in doubt any longer, and without waiting to hear more of the argument, he rushed through the bushes, and called: "I'm very much alive, Rusty. But if I had that journey to make again, I think I'd be dead before another day."

Bobby's sudden entrance on the scene caused a great commotion. All the birds stopped warbling and whistling. They crowded around Bobby, forming a big circle ten deep. They were all there, every one of his friends, and in the fore-front were Rusty and Flicker.

"How did you get here?" asked Flicker finally. "And what do you want?"

Bobby smiled, paying no attention to Flicker's unfriendly attitude. "I've been running all day," he replied. "It was a long trip, too. You know I can't run as fast as you can fly."

"But what do you want here?" continued Flicker, and the other birds nodded their heads.

"Why, I came to ask you to come back," stammered Bobby. "The little girl is heart-

broken, and you know if you never come back she will grieve and never get well and strong."

"What have we to do with the little girl?" asked Singer the Mocking Bird. "We tried to help her in clearing the tree of worms, and we were nearly killed in doing it. Was that a trap set for us, Bobby?"

"And did you know about it?" interrupted Gray the Kingbird suddenly. "Did you know they were going to shoot at us? If you did, Bobby, it would be better for you if you never followed us here. Now what have you to say for yourself!"

"Yes," added Flicker sharply. "Now you're here, Bobby, you must give an account of yourself. The birds have been terribly frightened, but they're more angry now than anything else."

There was a tweaking of many bills and snapping of wing tips at this, and as Bobby looked around at the circle he found very few who stood ready to believe him.

"I'm surprised," replied Bobby slowly, "but more pained than surprised, that you should distrust me. You, Goldy, whose nest I saved from destruction last summer when the wind snapped off the branch, do you believe I'd betray you and your friends?"

Goldy looked ashamed, and started to reply, but Bobby turned from her to Mr. Pine Grosbeak.

"Surely, Mr. Grosbeak," he added, "you haven't turned against me, too! Have you forgotten how I broke my leg in fixing up your winter shelter, and was laid up weeks for it? I didn't complain then, nor ask any thanks from you. But I did expect you'd trust me, and not think ill of me. Alas! Haven't I any friends left?"

Bobby sighed, and his sigh seemed to cut worse than his words. Goldy the Oriole raised her head, and hopped nearer to him, and Mr. Pine Grosbeak chirped aloud, and said:

"Bobby, I'm your friend. I don't believe these horrid suspicions about you."

"Neither do I, Bobby," replied Goldy. "I know you couldn't do such a thing as betray us."

"Ha! Ha!"

Rusty the Blackbird broke out in loud laughter, and made every one jump and turn to him. "Ha! Ha!" he added, rollicking with laughter. "Friendship is a queer thing. Turn your back on it, and it freezes up. Let an ill wind blow on it and it dries up. Let

somebody whisper an evil word, and everybody buzzes with it. Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Many were offended by this rude interruption, and Bobby was sorely puzzled. But Rusty soon made his meaning plain. He hopped in front of the others, and addressed Bobby.

"Bobby, we got the fright of our lives when that gun went off," he added. "It was bad enough when Dasher pounced down upon us, but that gun was the limit. We got panic-stricken — yes, I was as bad as any of them."

"It frightened me, too," replied Bobby. "At first I was so startled that I jumped in the window by the side of the little girl. From there I saw what happened, and heard why the gun was shot off."

"What did you see?" asked Rusty.

"I saw Dasher's tail feathers flying in the air when the shot hit him," answered Bobby smiling.

"Was Dasher hit?" asked several in a breath.

"Certainly — hit hard too. The gun was aimed at him and his mate."

"You saw that?" added Rusty. "Then what did you hear?"

"I heard the gunner say that he wanted to drive the Hawks away and protect the song

birds. He was afraid the noise might frighten the small birds away, but he hoped not."

"You heard that?" continued Rusty. "And what else?"

"I heard the little girl cry out to the birds not to be frightened, and when you all flew away she asked me to tell them to come back again. The shot was not intended to hurt them, but to drive Dasher away."

"Ha! Ha! Ha!" broke out Rusty again in immoderate laughter. "Now will you believe me, Flicker and Gray? Didn't I tell you that was the meaning of the shot? But, of course, you didn't see and hear what Bobby did, and you were too frightened to think. But I told you that all along. Now you've heard it from Bobby's lips, maybe you'll believe it."

Flicker, Singer and Gray were mute. They didn't like to acknowledge right away they were in the wrong, but in the face of Bobby's testimony and Rusty's mocking laughter they couldn't voice their old words of suspicion.

"Bobby, I didn't believe ill of you," twitted Towhee the Chewink in a low voice. "And I couldn't think of anything but good of the little girl."

"Thank you, Towhee," replied Bobby.

"I know you had nothing to do with it," chirped Downy the Woodpecker. "Pshaw!

It was all a false alarm. I didn't want to fly so far, but everybody else seemed to be going, and I kept up with them."

Yellow-Breast the Chat, Hermit the Thrush, Piney the Purple Finch, Mr. Crested Flycatcher, Black Cap the Chickadee, and a host of other small friends crowded around Bobby, and assured him of their undying friendship. Bobby felt quite overwhelmed by the attention, and forgetting his hardships and disappointments he laughed, and said: "All's well that ends well. Now let us forget and forgive."

And all the birds set up a warble of delight, which made the woods ring with music, with Singer the Mocking Bird leading in the chorus in imitation of the song of first one bird and then of another.

In the next story Bobby induces the birds to return.

STORY XV

Bobby Induces the Birds to Return

Bobby had accomplished only half his mission when he regained the trust and confidence of the birds. The other half he knew would be much more difficult. He wanted to get the promise of the birds, especially of Rusty, Goldy and his particular friends, that they would go back and build their nests in the big tree where the little girl could watch and feed them all through the summer.

It was one thing to convince them that he had nothing to do with the terrible noise that had frightened them, and quite another to make them understand the shooting was intended only for Dasher and his mate. He knew the natural shyness of his feathered friends, and their mortal terror of a gun.

After a while, when the birds had settled down again, and Bobby was admitted without fear or distrust among them, he decided to take council of Rusty, his true friend.

"Rusty," he said abruptly, "the little girl is pining away by this time because we don't return. I must go back to her."

"Isn't it pleasanter here, Bobby?" asked Rusty. "Then why not stay with us?"

"No, I must go back, and I want you to go with me and finish that nest you started."

Rusty frowned. "I should never feel happy there, Bobby," he said after a pause. "I'm afraid the gun would go off again, and frighten me to death."

"No, there's no danger of that. Don't you see Dasher was frightened away, and if he doesn't come gack the gun will never go off again?"

"If I could feel sure of that, I might think of it. The little girl fed me well."

"I can promise you there's no danger of it. Besides, do you know you're in danger here? Mr. Fox was trailing you through the woods to get your young ones, and I heard Hoot and Great Horn planning to make a raid on the colony tonight. Oh, they were sure they could kill all they wanted tonight."

Bobby told him in a few words what he had overheard the Owls say, and Rusty grew alarmed as he listened.

"How far are they from here?" he asked when he was through.

"Not more than half a mile."

Rusty was so disturbed by this news that he decided to lay the matter before the others.

In doing this he pleaded for Bobby, and advised that the birds return to the clearing around the house.

"As many of us as it will hold can build in the big tree," he said, "and the rest in the trees facing the house and back of it. We will form a colony then all by ourselves."

"How do we know we'll be protected?" asked Flicker. "We have only Bobby's word for it."

"No, you have the little girl's too," answered Bobby.

And Rusty added: "We won't starve either. If we keep the worms and bugs off the trees, they will feed us, and you know there are many weeks in the summer when food is scarce."

"Personally," remarked Gray the Kingbird, "I always like to build my nest in an orchard. It gives me a better chance to watch out for Mr. Crow and Dasher the Hawk. Here in the thick woods you can never see them until they're right on top of you."

Goldy finally turned the sentiment in Bobby's favor. She preened her feathers, and looked up pertly. "I think," she said, "I'll go back if Bobby and Rusty go. I never tasted such seed as the little girl gave me. Any girl

that would feed a bird as she did wouldn't hurt us. I'm sure of that."

"Well said, Goldy," chirped Rusty. "We'll go if none of the others will. We're not afraid if they are."

"I'll go too," piped up Downy the Woodpecker. "That top branch of the big tree will just suit me for a nest."

"You can't keep me from going," whistled Hermit the Thrush. "I'm ready to go with you now, Bobby."

Flicker decided that it was time to yield, and finding that most of the smaller birds were anxious to return he settled the matter in a wise way.

"I'm ready to do as Bobby says," he remarked. "I'll go back, but I think we should be cautious. I propose that Bobby goes ahead. Let him see the little girl, and find out if we're welcome. Then he can signal to us, and we'll be ready."

"That's a good suggestion," said Gray, "and I agree to it. Will you go ahead, Bobby, and make a report to us?"

"I certainly will," was the prompt rejoinder. "I'll start at once."

"We'll accompany you to the edge of the clearing," Gray added, "and wait for you there. If Hoot and Great Horn expect to

raid us here tonight, we'll disappoint them. We'll fly back in another direction so as not to pass their homes. Then they'll come looking for us here tonight, and be disappointed."

This idea pleased all of them, and they set up a loud chirp and whistle of approval. Bobby rested a little while, and then started to return. While the birds took a roundabout course, he made a bee line for the house. Hoot and Great Horn wouldn't hear him pass their homes, and they would never know that he had warned the birds of their danger.

Bobby made the trip back in quick time, for he was happy and anxious to see the little girl. He hardly stopped once to rest or eat, but even so it was very late in the afternoon before he reached the clearing. He was very tired and dirty, and was thankful when he saw that he had come to the end of his journey. It had been a hard day for him.

All was quiet around the place. No one was in sight. There hadn't been a bird or forest animal in the clearing since he left early that morning. It seemed very lonely and deserted.

But he saw in a glance that the window was open, and the little girl was sitting in it, looking very sad, pale and lonely. Bobby's heart went out to her, and with a little squeak of joy

he raced across the open space, climbed the tree, and hopped on the window-sill.

Now you can imagine the joy of the little girl when she saw Bobby coming. At first she could hardly believe it. She thought the gun had frightened Bobby and the birds away, and that they would never return.

"Oh, Bobby," she exclaimed, clapping her hands, "you haven't deserted me! You've come back to stay, haven't you? I've been so lonely and sick! I knew I was going to be very, very sick again if you didn't return."

Bobby tried to let her know that he had come to stay. He ate the nut she handed him, and let her stroke his head and back. He needed that nut after his long trip, and another and another. He couldn't stop long enough to give the signal to the birds that everything was as he had promised. He ate and ate until he began to feel fat and stuffed once more.

Then he hopped back on the branch, and ran up the tree to the top. The little girl called reproachfully to him. "You're not going to leave again, are you?"

Bobby couldn't stop to speak to her. He was bursting with the surprise he had in store. From the top of the tree he began to chatter as loud as he could, making a noise that could

be heard clear to the edge of the woods. Then came a sharp whistle in reply.

Almost before it died away, out of the woods flew the birds, with Rusty and Goldy in the lead. They came swarming into the tree in such numbers that the sun was obscured. They were all there — the warblers and their families, the flycatchers and nuthachers and thrushes, the high-holes and woodpeckers and Mrs. Oven-Bird and Mrs. Phoebe Bird. The little girl just clapped her hands, and said: "Oh! Oh!"

Now Bobby hadn't prepared for winter again, and he was very glum until the little girl told him of a great surprise.

STORY XVI

Bobby's Great Surprise

The coming of the birds again had a wonderful effect upon the little girl. Her face brightened, her cheeks flushed with joy, and her hands clapped with delight. She talked to them, calling them by names, and fed them all the dainties she had.

They spent the night roosting in the tree, and early the next morning they awakened her by their songs and whistles. The mother of the girl, seeing what a magical effect the presence of the birds had on her, moved the bed close to the window where she could watch them.

And all that morning they were busy building their nests! They brought sticks, straw, pieces of thread and old strips of cotton, which they wound and twisted among the branches until the tree looked as if it was blossoming with some new, strange fruit.

Gray the Kingfisher chose the top branch for his nest, and Goldy swung hers from one just below. Rusty took possession of a crotch

near the window, and Downy the Woodpecker began hammering at the rotten limb until he had drilled a hole a foot deep. Mrs. Phoebe Bird built her nest under the eaves of an upper porch, and Towhee the Chewink selected a clump of bushes on the lawn for his site.

All day long the little girl watched the noisy home-builders at work. Each new nest that went up delighted her, and she fed the builders with all the grain, seeds and berries they could eat. She soon became so interested in them that she forgot her sickness. She even forgot her pain.

Bobby, who had brought all this to pass, was the most active member of the colony. He was every where at once, as if he was superintendent of the job. If a dispute arose among the builders he tried to settle it with a few words of wisdom.

"I believe, Bobby," the girl said one day, "you know more than any squirrel that ever lived. And the birds understand you."

Bobby nodded his head sagely, and wanted to say he was anxious to have every one of his friends satisfied. If that was wisdom then he was wise.

Rusty was his cheerful assistant. He did as much superintending as building, for he wasn't going to have the plan spoilt by any petty

quarrels. When Belt the Sapsucker angered Downy the Woodpecker by pounding on the rotten limb with his sharp bill, Rusty flew up to settle the matter amicably.

"Now, Belt," he said severely, "you keep away from Downy's hole. There are plenty of rotten limbs in the orchard if you want to drum. Go there, and stop disturbing Downy."

Belt accepted the reproof meekly, and flew away to the orchard. Trouble developed between Piney the Purple Finch and Mr. Crested Flycatcher about the possession of a certain limb, and Rusty and Bobby both interfered. It was finally settled by each taking a separate part of the same limb and promising not to interfere with the other.

The days passed quickly, and the nests were nearly finished. Goldy crowed aloud when she completed hers first, but Hermit the Thrush was only a few hours behind her. Then Black Cap the Chickadee announced that his home was finished, and Yellow Breast the Chat came next.

Spring was rapidly waning and summer days were at hand. A great hush seemed to follow the busy, noisy house-building of the birds. All the nests were full now, and tiny eggs began to appear in first one, and then in

another. They were blue, green and speckled eggs, with a few almost white.

From her window the little girl could look down in the nests and see the eggs. She kept count of them, and put them down in a book she kept for this purpose. This kept her so busy that she soon forgot all about her sickness.

Then the day came when she was strong enough to stand up. She walked to the window, and looked out. All the birds, as if pleased at this, flew up and lighted on the window-sill. There they began to sing and warble, while the little girl watched them with flushed cheeks.

"I know you're glad to see me strong and well again," she murmured, feeding them. "How I love you!"

From somewhere in back the mother and father of the little girl watched her feeding the birds. There were tears of joy in the eyes of the mother. "I believe," she whispered, "the birds understand her. When she talks to them they chirp back. Isn't it wonderful?"

"Yes, but the most wonderful part is that it's cured her of her sickness," replied the father. "If it hadn't been for the birds she might have pined away and died. She was so lonely here."

"But you mustn't forget Bobby," the mother said quickly. "It was Bobby who made friends first, and I believe he called the birds here. Yes, I'm sure of it. See him now with them. He's the happiest of all."

"I guess you're right," was the reply. Then with a smile on his face, he added: "But didn't I hear you say something about hating squirrels? They were such a nuisance in littering up the house in winter. And this particular squirrel was the guiltiest of all."

Instead of being offended at this, the little girl's mother smiled happily. "I think," she said gently, "I'll leave the window of the tower room open again this winter, and you must stock it with nuts. Bobby deserves a warm place for winter, and all the nuts he can eat."

Of course, Bobby couldn't hear this conversation, and he didn't know exactly what would happen to him that winter. At times his conscience troubled him, for, would you believe it, he hadn't made any preparations for cold weather again? He had been so busy helping the birds, and cheering the little girl that he had put off again until tomorrow things that he should have done today.

But sometimes when you do this, because you spend all your time making life pleasanter

for others, it isn't such a great sin. Maybe it is a good thing we have such people in the world, and we should be ready to reward them.

At any rate Bobby was rewarded. He did not know it until the first cold days and nights of autumn came again. Then he said to himself: "I must look out for a winter home, and, if it isn't too late, I must stock it with nuts."

But before he could hop away to begin this work, the little girl picked him up in her arms and whispered in his ears: "Oh, Bobby, you've been so good to me that I've got a surprise for you."

She carried him up into the tower room, and showed him the biggest collection of nuts he had ever seen in one place. His eyes opened in surprise and astonishment.

"They're all for you, Bobby," she added. "There will be enough for winter, and you can stay in the tower room on cold nights. See that bunch of soft hay and grass in the corner. That's for your bed. You can be quite happy and comfy here all winter, can't you?"

Bobby nodded his head, and jumped out of her arms to taste some nuts. They were all real! What a treasure they were! No chance of starving that winter! He could eat all he

wanted, and invite his friends in to share his good luck. Even Stripe and Web couldn't eat him out of house and home, no matter how greedy they were. Bobby thought he was the luckiest squirrel in the world, and perhaps he was; but he deserved to be. Don't you think so?

Here ends the story of Bobby Gray Squirrel, but if you are interested in some of the adventures of his forest friends, read the book "Buster the Big Brown Bear," for Buster in his way was almost as likable and companionable as Bobby.

BUSTER THE BIG BROWN BEAR

STORY I

When Buster Was a Cub

In the North Woods where Buster was born, a wide river tinkles merrily over stones that are so white you'd mistake them for snowballs, if you were not careful, and begin pelting each other with them. The birches hanging over the water look like white sticks of peppermint candy, except in the spring of the year when they blossom out in green leaves, and then they make you think of fairyland where everything is painted the colors of the rainbow.

The rocks that slope up from the bank of the river are dented and broken as if some giant in the past had smashed them with his hammer, cracking some and punching deep holes in others. It was in one of these holes, or caves, that Buster was born.

He didn't mind the hard rocky floor of his bed a bit, nor did he mind the darkness, nor the cold winds that swept through the open doorway. He was so well protected by his

The continuation of this interesting story will be found in
BUSTER THE BIG BROWN BEAR
Price 65 Cents Postpaid
THE JOHN C. WINSTON COMPANY, Publishers
517 S. Wabash Ave. CHICAGO, ILL. | Winston Building PHILADELPHIA, PA. | 129 Spadina Ave. TORONTO, ONT.

Bumper the White Rabbit

STORY I

WHERE BUMPER CAME FROM

THERE was once an old woman who had so many rabbits that she hardly knew what to do. They ate her out of house and home, and kept the cupboard so bare she often had to go to bed hungry. But none of the rabbits suffered this way. They all had their supper, and their breakfast, too, even if there wasn't a crust left in the old woman's cupboard.

There were big rabbits and little rabbits; lean ones and fat ones; comical little youngsters who played pranks upon their elders, and staid, serious old ones who never laughed or smiled the livelong day; boy rabbits and girl rabbits, mother rabbits and father rabbits, and goodness knows how many aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces, cousins, second cousins and distant relatives-in-law! They all lived under one big roof in the

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